

# **REFERENCE CHECKING**

Reference checks can supply more information about the applicant's qualifications than any other source; and this information may be more objective than the applicant's responses. In many instances, reference data is the deciding factor in hiring or rejecting potential employees. The personnel department usually checks references, but if the work is highly technical, the operating supervisor or manager may check.

Some people check references before the interview, some after. If before, particular bits of reference information can be checked with the applicants themselves. If after, you can check items of interview data with the former employer. It's recommended to do them after the interview and only on the applicant(s) to whom you are considering making an offer. However, if considering a candidate who lives a great distance away, you may want to check references on him/her before the interview. Some candidates will not survive the reference check.

## **What to Ask**

When checking references, keep the following points in mind. Questions must be job related and be sure to carefully document reference information. Seek a factual basis for any opinions given. Finally, the same State and Federal laws that govern the interview apply to the reference checking process as well.

Another reason to conduct thorough reference checks is the concern about "negligent hiring." Reference checks are not only your right as an employer, they are your responsibility as well. Failure to do appropriate background and reference checks may make it difficult for an employer to defend itself should a negligent hiring lawsuit be filed.